Mr. *WRIGHT's*

FAST-SERMON.

SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION CONSIDERED:

IN A

SERMON

On Ephes. ii. 20.

Preached at Salters-Hall, *February* 6, 1734-5.

With Enlargements.

By *SAMUEL WRIGHT*, D. D.

In hanc insipientiam cadunt, qui cum ad cognoscendam veritatem aliquo impediuntur obscuro, non ad prophetica voces, non ad apostolicas literas, nec ad evangelicas auctoritates, sed ad seipsos recurrunt.

The Second Edition.

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EPHESIANS ii. 20.

" And are built upon the foundation
" of the apoſtles, and prophets, JESUS
" CHRIST himſelf being the chief
" corner-ſtone."

THE foregoing diſcourſes againſt the pretenſions of the *Romaniſts*, have given you an account of their ſetting up a *kingdom of this world*, under the name and notion of a *Church*; which they aſſert, is the only church that hath ſalvation in it, and the *Keys* of Heaven and Hell committed to its rulers and paſtors. In one *diſcourſe*, the *notes* and *marks*, which they bring to prove themſelves the *true* and *only* church of CHRIST, have been examined; and the falſhood of their ways of arguing from thence, was ſhewn. In *another diſcourſe*, their grievous uſurpation and iniquity was expoſed in placing at the head of their church a *ſovereign Pontiff*; whom they make, very unjuſtly, ſucceſſor to St. *Peter*, as if he had a power ſuperior to the *other apoſtles*, and ſuperior to the kings of the earth; yea, whoſe *decrees*, and *diſ-*

pensing powers, are advanced above all that ever were called GODS in this world. In a *third discourse*, the pretended *authority* and *infallibility* of this church, (that is, of the Pope and his councils) you have had fairly represented, and very largely exposed.

My province now is, to set before you the *true* and *only foundation* upon which the *Christian Catholick Church* is built; with the necessity of our adhering to the *Scriptures*, through faith in CHRIST, for our eternal salvation. So that my present business will be to prove the *perfection*, and *perspicuity* of the holy scriptures; and the reason that we have to receive them as the *word of* GOD, without depending upon the *testimony* of the *church* of *Rome*, or admitting their *traditions* as *necessary* to be received together with the sacred writings.

All their usurped *authority*, the doctrine of the Pope's *supremacy*, and their confining the title of *Catholick Church* to themselves, are built upon, and supported by what they call either *apostolical*, or *ecclesiastical* traditions.

I have therefore chosen the *text* now read, for the subject of the *ensuing* discourse; being better suited (in my apprehension) than any other I could fix upon, to answer the ends I have in view. "And are built upon the foundation of "the apostles and prophets, JESUS CHRIST "himself being the chief corner-stone."

That we may see the true meaning and import of these words, our attention will be requisite for a few minutes to the *context*, before we come to

to apply ourſelves to the difference betwixt us and the Papiſts about *ſcripture* and *traditions*.

St. *Paul*, in the 1ſt, 4th, and 5th verſes of this *chapter*, tells the *Epheſians* who were converted to Chriſtianity out of the heathen or *gentile world*, That " they who were dead in treſpaſ- " ſes and ſins, are quickened together with " CHRIST." Thro' the " rich mercy and great " love of GOD," there was a power, proportionate to that of quickening and raiſing the *dead body* of CHRIST, manifeſted in their being *quickened together with him*. The apoſtle therefore deſcribes the ſtate of *ſin*, and *death*, and ſubjection to the *prince* of *this world*, (v. 2, 3.) in which they were, when the goſpel was ſent by the free undeſerved favour and grace of GOD to *ſave them*; and which by the power and love of GOD became effectual to their converſion, and to bring them into the Chriſtian life.

In the ſame mighty power and love we hope and truſt, for the raiſing and quickening that part of the world *called Chriſtian*, where thro' a dreadful and long apoſtacy, men are walking juſt as the heathen *Epheſians* did, " according " to the courſe of this world, according to the " prince of the power of the air, the ſpirit that " now worketh in the children of diſobedience." Amongſt whom even *we* of this Proteſtant kingdom, " had our converſation in times paſt, in " the luſts of our fleſh, fulfilling the deſires [or " wills] of the fleſh, and of the mind, and " were by nature the children of wrath, even as " others." The rich mercy, the great love wherewith GOD loved us, when he ſaved us out

of

of ſuch a ſtate of ſlavery, and death, as that of Popery, ſhould encourage us to hope for the ſalvation of other nations and people, in the day of GOD's *power*; and whilſt we are uſing our beſt endeavours to recommend a pure ſcriptural religion, let us wait for the manifeſtations of a further power from on high, when the LORD himſelf ſhall "conſume that Wicked by the ſpirit of "his mouth, and ſhall deſtroy him with the "brightneſs of his coming." A firm perſuaſion that the overthrow of *Popery*, (let the kings and rulers of the earth favour it as they pleaſe) ſhall be by a power like that which *raiſed* CHRIST from *the dead*, and firſt ſet up the goſpel kingdom in the world, led me to this *digreſſion*; which will, I hope, be allow'd upon the preſent occaſion.

To proceed in our account of the context: The *Gentiles* being brought into the kingdom of GOD by pure grace and favour, as the *Jews* had been of old, both were *raiſed together*, and made to *ſit together* in the ſame goſpel kingdom, which is called the kingdom of Heaven, or *heavenly places* in CHRIST JESUS, v. 6. They were both alike in this, that there were no works of which either could boaſt; but works for which both might have been for ever rejected and condemned. By grace alone they were both equally privileg'd, both being ſaved upon the ſame foot, that is, through FAITH. And this ſalvation thro' faith, (in the whole contrivance * and method of it)

* τοῦτο ſeems to refer to the whole work of ſalvation, and not to [πίστεως] faith, by a regular conſtruction.

it) they were ever to look upon as the *gift of* God, and not owing *to themselves*, ver. 8. So that no such thing as works of *supererogation*, or works to be boasted of in the sight of God, and *meriting* at his hands, are to be brought into the gospel scheme of being saved, v. 9. " not of works, lest any man should boast." And yet this salvation doth necessarily include *good works*, as the fruit and effect of faith in Christ; for which God hath before provided, that we should both be directed and enabled to walk in them, v. 10. " For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good " works, which God hath before ordained, [or " prepared] that we should walk in them." He hath made sufficient preparation for this under the gospel.

The matter being thus stated, and *Jew* and *Gentile* thus united, the apostle would have the *Ephesians* mindful of their former state of *aliens*, which he describes in the 11th and 12th verses; and also by whom this *union* was brought about, Christ Jesus; and how wonderfully it was effected, by his *crucifixion* and *blood*; of which a very distinct account is given in those five verses, from the 13th to the 18th ver. But I must not stay upon them; tho' there are several things concerning the abolishing of the *Jewish* rites and ordinances, and dissolving their church-state, as a national and temporal polity, that may serve to expose the *schismatical* principles and practices of the Papal *state* and church: In which innumerable rites and ordinances are set up, more *carnal* and *worldly*, than those of *Moses*; and a *temporal* kingdom

kingdom and polity more injuriously exclusive of the nations that refuse subjection to them, than the *Jewish* covenant of peculiarity was.

To go on: CHRIST having "*preached peace* "to them that were far off, and to them that "were nigh, it follows, that through him both "have an access, by one SPIRIT, unto the "FATHER." Here we see what regards are due to the ever-blessed Trinity, FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, in the affair of our salvation. The whole work is built upon it, and the whole church is hereby framed together to be an holy temple in the Lord. So that this doctrine is to be received, not as the doctrine of the *Roman* church, nor as the doctrine of any particular *Protestant* church; but as a *scripture doctrine*, upon which the universal church is built. Where this doctrine is received and believed, as the scripture requires it should, producing all the genuine and saving effects of such a faith, what is said of the *Ephesian* church may be applied to others; "In "WHOM *(i. e.)* [the LORD Jesus Christ] you "also are builded together for an habitation of "GOD, through the SPIRIT." Thus ends the chapter where our *text* is.

According to this most wise, and most extensively merciful and benevolent constitution of things, the *Gentiles* are taken into the same *houshold* of GOD with the *Jews*. And in *every nation*, where a number of men are brought to believe and obey the *gospel*, and to worship GOD according to the ordinances thereof, they are to be look'd upon as parts and members of the *one Catholick* church of Christ. Even to us in these

these *isles afar off* from any likelihood to partake such blessings, are these glad tidings sent: "Ye are no more strangers, and foreigners, but "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the "houshold of God." It will reward your pains, diligently to compare the 12th and 19th verses of this chapter, to take the sense of these expressions, as they include *all* that are in Christ Jesus *every where*: All such being now equally invested with the same rights and privileges, as *fellow-citizens*, and admitted to the same nearness to God, as *domesticks*.

All the churches of Christ, being thus *made one* by him *who is our peace*, are built upon the *foundation* of the *apostles* and *prophets*, Jesus Christ himself being the *chief corner-stone*.

From this thread of St. *Paul*'s discourse, concerning the *Jews* and *Gentiles* being made one, it is evident, that by the *prophets* he means the Old Testament *scriptures*, and by the *apostles* the New. The whole church of God, both under former dispensations, and now under the gospel, was, and is built, upon the doctrine of the *prophets*, including *Moses* as the principal and most eminent of them; and upon the doctrine of the *apostles*, including St. *Paul* who writes this with the other apostles: Their doctrine (as has been said before) not their *persons*, is the foundation upon which God hath built his church; Jesus Christ being the *chief corner-stone*, by which both parts of the building are *united*, and upon which they *rest*. Both prophets and apostles *center* in him.

The *primary* foundation is Christ. Therefore in another text of scripture it is said,

" That other foundation can no man lay, than " that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST, 1 *Cor.* " iii. 2." In that very place, *Paul*, *Apollos*, and *Cephas* (or *Peter)* himſelf, are denied to be foundations. They were only *miniſters* by whom Chriſt and the eſſentials of Chriſtianity were preached, and workmen by whom the church was raiſed; and in THIS view they themſelves refer to CHRIST as the *only foundation.* But the *doctrines*, or *writings* of the prophets and apoſtles, are the foundation of GOD's church in a *ſecondary* ſenſe; they being authorized by Chriſt, and qualified by the guidance and aids of his infallible Spirit, to lay thoſe foundations thro' faith in his name, upon which the whole fabrick or ſuperſtructure ſhould abide, and be carried on throughout all ages of the world.

From hence, therefore, the two following things are evident, which may comprize all that is neceſſary to be ſaid on the *part* I have choſen to take in this lecture.

I. That the church of GOD, the true church of Chriſt throughout all nations, is built *intirely* upon the Scriptures. And therefore,

II. That a church built upon *traditions*, which are beſide and againſt ſcripture, as far as it goes off from, or oppoſeth the apoſtles and prophets, is a building *of men*, formed to ſerve their *own ends* and purpoſes, not thoſe of the goſpel.

I thought to have enlarged on that delightful view of our *text*, its referring to JESUS CHRIST as the grand *ſubject* and *ſcope* of the writings both of the *prophets* and *apoſtles:* And to have conſidered the expreſſion here uſed, Chriſt *himſelf being*

ing the chief corner-ſtone, together with thoſe places that ſtyle him the *head* of the *corner* : But ſo many things have been ſuggeſted already on the *headſhip* of our LORD JESUS, and his being *ſole* king in his own kingdom, without any *vicarious* governour, or *viſible head* of his church here on earth, that I need not take up any of the preſent time in diſcourſing on this part of the ſubject. I ſhall therefore now keep to the two general heads I have mention'd.

I. The church of GOD, conſiſting of the *whole body* of *Chriſtians*, is built *intirely* upon *the ſcriptures*.

This hath been inſiſted on already, and in one view or other will be referr'd to in all our diſcourſes againſt the *Romaniſts*. But what I have now to offer, will be in a manner quite different from what has been ſaid before; but yet ſo as to be a further and fuller confirmation of the foregoing diſcourſes.

By the *ſcriptures* we mean the books of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, as they are now received, and allowed to be *canonical* by the church of *Rome*, as well as by ourſelves, excepting what we commonly call the *Apocrypha*. For tho' the apocryphal books may be read " for example " of *life*, and inſtruction of manners, yet they " are no part of the canon of ſcripture, nor is " any doctrine to be eſtabliſhed by them."

As to the pretended *authority* of the church of *Rome*, to ſettle the *canon* of ſcripture, and to determine what *is* ſcripture, and what *not*, ſo much hath been ſaid already, that I need not ſtay to expoſe their pretenſions in a way of *confutation*.

The reasons that we have to believe *the scriptures* are the word of God, and to receive the present *books* of the *Old* and *New Testament* as *genuine*, without our having any regard to the *Roman church* as such, will appear in the sequel of this discourse.

When we assert that the church of Christ is built upon the scriptures, the church of *Rome* doth not oppose us, while they allow, 'That 'the scripture is to be received by all Christians 'as the *infallible word* of God.' But when they say, that the scripture is not a *sufficient foundation* to build the church upon, without their interpretations and additions; in opposition to that we say, 'That the true church of Christ, 'throughout all nations, is built INTIRELY upon 'the scripture.' That is, either upon those things which are *expressly contained* in scripture, or such things as are *plainly proved* from thence, by consequences that are referr'd to every man's reason and conscience, as in the sight of God.

This is what we mean by a *judgment* of *private discretion*, upon which Protestants very justly oppose the impositions, and pretended powers of the *Roman church*, in matters that concern our salvation.

1. I shall therefore shew, in opposition to *Popery*, the sufficiency or *perfection* of scripture to inform and guide us in all *necessary* things.

We say, that "Whatsoever is not read in "scripture, nor may be proved thereby, is not "to be required of any man, that it should be "believed as an article of faith, or be thought "requisite, or necessary to salvation." *Article* VI.

The

The *Romanists* say, that 'All things necessa-
'ry to salvation are NOT contained in scripture,
'but that a number of articles, relating both to
'faith, worship, and manners, are to be received
'from their church.'

The *Council* of *Trent* declared, that the *oral traditions* of the Catholick church (meaning the *Roman)* were to be received with EQUAL PIETY and *reverence*, as the *books* of the *Old* and *New Testament* *; and he that despiseth the said traditions, is accursed †.

But I need not take pains to prove this, since it is not denied by those that are now endeavouring to make converts to *Popery* in this city. In a little pamphlet which hath been put into many hands of late, it is asked, *Why should not the scripture alone be the rule of faith?* And the answer there given, in one part of it, is, *Because several necessary articles are either not* AT ALL *contained in scripture, or at least are not plain in the scripture without the help of tradition.* Of tradition we shall speak hereafter. The quoting of this passage here, is only to shew, that their *asserting* the *insufficiency of scripture to salvation*, is what they openly avow and teach, even in a *Protestant* country.

Now in this, let their own confession, of the *scriptures* being the *infallible word of* GOD, be their confutation. For that infallible word declares, "That all scripture is given by inspira-
"tion of GOD, and is profitable for doctrine,
"for reproof, for correction, for instruction in
"righteousness,

* Pari pietatis affectu, ac reverentia, suscipit ac veneratur.

† Si quis—Traditiones prædictas sciens & prudens contempserit, *Anathema* sit. *Concil. Trid. Sess.* 4. *Decr. de Scripturis.*

" righteousness, that the man of GOD may be " PERFECT, [or may be *perfected*] *throughly* " *furnished* unto ALL good works, 2 *Tim.* iii. 16, " 17." If the *man* of GOD here be understood of a *pastor*, or *teacher* of others, then it is expressly declared, that the scripture is given to perfect the pastor or teacher for his office, and *throughly* to furnish him for all good works belonging to his station. That whatever is needful in a way of *doctrine* relating to matters of truth and faith, or in a way of *reproof* to shew men their errors, or in a way of *correction* to convict men of sin and of their faults, or in a way of *instruction* as to their duty, to teach them all righteousness; in all these things the scripture is to *perfect* the man of God, and *throughly* to furnish him for *every good work*; and therefore it must contain every thing necessary to such purposes. Consequently if any thing taught by the man of GOD, or pretended man of God, be not in the scripture, nor to be evidently and convincingly *deduced* from thence, it is not *necessary* to salvation. Yea, by this infallible word of GOD, such man is out of *the way* of salvation *himself*, that does require any thing to be received as of *equal authority* with the gospel. If an *apostle*, or an *angel* from Heaven was to be accursed for doing this, surely a bishop or missionary of *Rome* cannot expect to fare better, in declaring that there are *several* NECESSARY *articles* NOT *contained in scripture*. " Though " we, (saith the apostle) or an angel from hea- " ven preach any other gospel, than that which " we *have preached* unto you, let him be ac-

" cursed."

" curſed." To impreſs this the more, and to declare the certainty of the curſe apoſtolical coming upon ſuch, it is immediately repeated, (not in ſpeaking only, but in writing, of which there would have been leſs need, if the importance of the thing had not required it :) " As " we ſaid before, ſo ſay I now again, if any " man preach any other goſpel unto you, than " that ye have received, let him be accurſed, " *Gal.* i. 8, 9.

Perhaps it will be here replied, That the church of *Rome* alloweth the *ſufficiency* of ſcripture to *perfect* the man of God, provided it be *interpreted* as the *Catholick church* directs, meaning *themſelves*; and that there be alſo, with them, a holding faſt thoſe *traditions* to which this written word refers.

But will this free them from the charge of inconſiſtency, and *ſelf-contradiction?* They profeſs to receive the *ſcripture* (that is, the word *written*) as the infallible word of God. This word declares, that [as written] it is profitable to all thoſe purpoſes that ſhall make the man of God *perfect*, *throughly* furniſhed to *all good works*. Then they ſay, That there are *other articles* neceſſary to make the biſhop or paſtor *perfect*, which are *not contained* in the word written, but are preſerved and handed down from one age to another by tradition.

Now what can be an abſurdity, and ſelf-contradiction, if this be not;---- That the *written* word of God is infallibly true, which ſays, The *ſcriptures* are able to make men *wiſe to ſalvation* thro' faith in Chriſt Jeſus, and to make the *man*

of

of God *perfect:* And yet that they are NOT *able* to make the man of God *perfect* without other *necessary articles* added to them.

The *Romanists*, to palliate this inconsistency, and prevent the offence it must needs give, if it was clearly discerned, here plead, That the scripture itself refers to *traditions*, which are to be *held fast*, as well as the things that are *written*. For which they quote a passage out of the second Epistle to the *Thessalonians*; "Therefore brethren "stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye "have been taught, whether by word or our "epistle." The true and full meaning of that place, will be set before you by and by. Nothing is needful to be said here, save only to observe, That by the *Romanist*'s explication of this text, they make the *scripture* contradict itself; as if it declared in one place, That the things written are *sufficient to salvation* through faith in Christ, and to *perfect* the man of God; and then in *another* place, requires the holding fast traditions taught by WORD ONLY, which were to be in all ages *additional* to those things that are *written*; for this is their explication: Whereas the scripture evidently speaks of the *same things* that were taught by the apostles, both in *word* and *writing*; and therefore whether they were received from THEM, in one way or the other, the *Thessalonians* were required to hold them fast.

But if the *Romish* church can throw their own inconsistencies and absurdities upon the scripture, they do not stick to do it, however they expose that sacred book to contempt. The more Infidels are led to cavil against it, and to deny the truth of

of it, the more *necessary* do Papists make the testimony and authority of their church: And well pleas'd they are if this point be gain'd, however unfairly the scripture is treated either by themselves or others.

Here lies the head-spring and main support of *Popery:* To set the scriptures at *variance*, and to excite a variety of opinions and warm disputes amongst men thereupon; to which, in the critical and rational way, they are always ready to lend their assistance on *either side*; and then make a *judge* of *controversies* necessary to determine whose opinion shall stand, and be confirmed by the stamp of authority. And this judge of controversies they make *infallible*, so as to abide by his decisions, though they prove to be contrary to *express scripture*. In this, they assume a power beyond that of God himself, and therefore expose themselves to a just contempt, in pretending to make both parts of a *contradiction* true. For what the scripture asserts, they say is infallibly true, and yet what their church determines, (though it happen to be contrary to scripture) they say is infallibly true also.

Erasmus would have put the church of *Rome* into a way to have secured their *credit* and *power* much better, (when so many nations were breaking off from them in the beginning of the Reformation) if his sentiments had been of sufficient weight with them. He would have had them to make no articles of faith necessary upon the *authority* of the *church*, but what are made necessary in *scripture*; which if they had been so wise as to comply with, they had got clear of a

great number of articles by which they have been carried to ſet one *infallibility* againſt another. His ſentiments are worth reciting, as they are preſerved in one of his *epiſtles:* * " This would re-
" concile people to the church of *Rome*, if all
" things, ſays he, were not ſo particularly de-
" fined, and made a matter of faith, which we
" would have to belong to it; but thoſe only
" which are *evidently expreſs'd* in the holy ſcrip-
" tures, or without which we do not ſee any
" way *to be ſaved.* To this purpoſe, a few
" things may be ſufficient: And a few things
" may be ſooner perſuaded, than a great many.
" Now

* Quin & illud, mea ſententia, complures populos conciliaret eccleſiæ Romanæ,——ſi non paſſim quælibet ſic definiantur, ut velimus ad fidei negotium pertinere; ſed ea duntaxat, quæ evidenter expreſſa ſunt in ſacris literis, aut ſine quibus non conſtat ratio ſalutis noſtræ. Ad hæc pauca ſufficiunt, & pauca citius perſuadentur pluribus. Nunc ex uno articulo ſexcentos facimus, quorum aliqui tales ſunt, ut citra periculum pietatis vel neſciri poſſint, vel ambigi. Atque ſic eſt mortalium ingenium, quod ſemel definitum eſt, tenemus mordicus. Porro philoſophiæ *Chriſtianæ* ſumma in hoc ſita eſt, ut intelligamus omnem ſpem noſtram in Deo poſitam eſſe, qui gratis nobis largitur omnia per filium ſuum *Jeſum:* Hujus morte nos eſſe redemptos, in hujus corpus nos inſitos eſſe per baptiſmum, ut mortui cupiditatibus hujus mundi, ad illius doctrinam & exemplum ſic vivamus, ut non ſolum nihil admittamus mali, verum etiam de omnibus bene mereamur: Et ſi quid inciderit adverſi, fortiter toleremus ſpe futuri præmii, quod omnes pios haud dubie manet in adventu *Chriſti:* Ut ita ſemper progrediamur à virtute in virtutem, ut nihil tamen nobis arrogemus, ſed quicquid eſt boni Deo tranſcribamus. Hæc potiſſimum ſunt animis hominum inculcanda, ſic ut velut in naturam tranſeant. Quod ſi qui volent circa naturam divinam, aut circa hypoſtaſim *Chriſti,* aut ſacramenta quædam abſtruſiora rimari, quo magis attollant mentem in ſublime, & à rebus humilioribus abducant, hactenus liceat, ut non ſtatim quod huic aut illi viſum fuerit, cogantur omnes profiteri. Quemadmodum ex loquacibus ſyngraphis citius naſcitur controverſia, ſic ex plurimis definitionibus naſcitur diffidentia. *Epiſt. Eraſmi Rot. Joanni Slechtæ Bohemo Sec. Ed. Lug. Bat.* 1703. *Ep.* 478. *Oper. Omn. Tom.* 3. p. 521.

« Now out of one article, (as he goes on) we « make *ſix hundred*; ſome of which are ſuch, « that without endangering piety, we may ei- « ther be ignorant, or doubt of them. And « ſuch is the nature of mankind, that what is « once defined they hold ſo as to bite and devour « one another. But when all's done, the ſum « of Chriſtianity lies in this, (mind what he ſays) « that we underſtand all our hope to be placed « in God, who freely gives us all things by his « Son Jesus: By whoſe death we are redeemed, « into whoſe body we are planted by baptiſm, « that being dead to the luſt of this world, we « may live according to his doctrine and exam- « ple; not only abſtaining from all evil, but « endeavouring to deſerve well of every body: « And if any adverſity happen, that we bear « it couragiouſly, in hope of a future reward, « which, without doubt, waits for all pious per- « ſons at the coming of Chriſt. And that we « make ſuch progreſs from virtue to virtue, as « notwithſtanding to arrogate nothing to our- « ſelves, but to aſcribe all the good that is in us, « or that we can do, unto God.---Theſe things « are chiefly to be inculcated.----But if any will « ſearch into thoſe things that are more abſtruſe, « about the divine nature, the hypoſtaſis of « Chriſt, *&c.* that they may raiſe their minds « the higher, and draw them from things be- « low; let them do ſo, provided that every bo- « dy be not compell'd to believe what ſeems « good to this or that perſon. For as out of « large deeds law-ſuits ſooner ariſe, ſo by many « definitions of things differences are begotten."

Had this advice been taken, it would have prevented numberleſs *contradictions* which there are betwixt the infallible declarations of *ſcripture*, and the pretendedly infallible deciſions of the *Roman church*. Moſt agreeable was this advice to the *Oration* of *Conſtantine*, the firſt Chriſtian Emperor, when he would have *fixed a rule* for the council of *Nice* to keep to; (and no other rule ſhould ever be allowed by the civil power, for deciding matters in *eccleſiaſtical councils*;) " Since they had the doctrine of the holy " Spirit recorded *in writing*, he tells them, that the " books of the evangeliſts and apoſtles, and the " oracles of the old prophets, evidently taught " what we were to think of the divine Majeſty. " Therefore laying aſide ſeditious contention, " he would have matters determin'd by the *di-* " *vine writings*." *Theod. Hiſt. L.* 1. *c.* 7.

But the ends of the *Pope* and his *clergy* could not be anſwered by bringing articles of faith into ſo narrow a compaſs as the ſcripture had done. And therefore they went into the ſhameful *expedient* of taking away the *Bible* from the people; that their Clergy might have the delivering out of ſuch paſſages *only* as ſhould ſerve *their* purpoſes; and might keep thoſe things lock'd up, and out of ſight, that would diſcover their *abſurdities* and *contradictions*.

In thus denying the free uſe of *ſcripture*, their violence is not to be endured by thoſe that know how directly they go againſt the authority of God; and againſt many expreſs texts in both Teſtaments, that require men to *read* the ſcriptures diligently, and *teach* them to *their children*; and

and to keep to the *Law* and to the *Teſtimony*, declaring that they who ſpeak not *according to this* word have no *light in them:* And that all Chriſtians have it in charge from their Lord to *ſearch the Scriptures*, as the acknowledged fountains of eternal life. And thoſe things which were deliver'd by the firſt witneſſes to Chriſtianity, St. *Luke* declares were put into *writing*, that he who had been inſtructed in them before, might know them with *certainty*. And the apoſtles direct their *epiſtles* to the *ſaints* and *faithful brethren*; and expreſly require that they ſhould be read *unto all*. And in the cloſing book of Scripture, he is pronounced "bleſſed that readeth, and they that "hear the words of it."

It is not, as I ſaid, to be endured by thoſe that know theſe things, to be told they have no right to this bleſſing of reading the Scriptures, and that they are not fit to be truſted with Bibles in their own tongue. However the Papiſts may colour this matter, or repreſent the ſenſe of the church of *Rome*, in thoſe places where they ſee Bibles in every common hand and houſe; yet the uſe of the Bible is prohibited upon *ſevere penalties* in all Popiſh countries. *Azorius*, a man of great fame in the 16th century, (whoſe merit as a linguiſt, ſcripturiſt, and moral philoſopher, is highly extoll'd amongſt the Jeſuits, amongſt whom he was rector of ſeveral colleges) declares, that *it is a hereſy to ſay the Scriptures ought to be tranſlated into vulgar languages*. And this he aſſerts at the ſame time that he admits *all were allow'd to read the Scriptures for ſeveral hundred years*.* And another

* Inſtit. moral. l. 8. c. 26.

ther of their learned men yields to *Erasmus*, that the Scriptures *were of old translated into the vulgar tongues*, and that *the fathers*, such as St. Chrysostom and St. Jerom, *earnestly exhorted the people to read them*; but *the case is alter'd, since such mischief comes by reading the Scriptures.* † The council of *Trent* leaving it to the *Pope* to publish the *Index* of prohibited books, all persons are forbidden, by the *fourth rule* prefix'd to that *Index*, the use of *the Scripture in the vulgar tongue without a particular license; and whosoever presumes to do it*, [such a sad wicked thing it is to search the Scripture without their license] *he is not to receive absolution, unless he first give up his Bible.* And one of their best writers, upon the Scriptures *in Latin*, I mean *Estius*, tho' he is forc'd to allow, from *Timothy*'s *mother* and *grandmother* instructing him, when a child, in the holy Scriptures, that *women* are not to be wholly deprived of the use of the Scriptures; yet he presently adds, that *this is to be understood according to the rule of the* Roman *church*, (which I have just mention'd, and to which he refers) *to extend only to such as are judg'd out of danger of being hurt* ‖ by their reading of them. And who those licensers are like to confine such a favourable judgment to, you need not to be told.

But instead of bringing more testimonies to attest this, it will turn to much better account to answer their *pretended reason* for depriving the common people of the use of their *Bibles*.

This brings me to consider,

2. The

† Alph. à Castr. l. 1. c. 13.

‖ *Vid.* Est. Comment. in 2 Tim. iii. 15.

2. The *perſpicuity* or *plainneſs* of the ſacred Writings, in oppoſition to the *Popiſh* repreſentation of them.

Here it is alledg'd, that St. *Peter* hath aſſured us there are ſome things in St. *Paul*'s epiſtles " hard to be underſtood; which they that are " unlearned and unſtable *wreſt*, as they do alſo " the other ſcriptures, to their own deſtruction." 2 *Pet.* iii. 16. From hence the *Romaniſts* conclude, that the unlearned part of mankind are in more danger of being hurt by having the Scriptures, than by being denied the common uſe of them. There is ſuch a ſtreſs laid upon this in the little piece now handed about, to which I referr'd before, that upon this text in St. *Peter only*, the Scripture is determin'd *not to be ſufficiently clear, in all points wherein our ſalvation is concerned; but that the miſunderſtanding, and miſinterpreting of it, may endanger our eternal ſalvation.* I have taken the very words from the *Profeſſion* of *Catholick Faith*, extracted from the *Council of Trent* by Pope *Pius* IV. which is now in uſe for the *reception of converts into their church.* And, as the many learned and excellent writings againſt *Popery* in former reigns, were ſpecially ſuited to the Popiſh books then in vogue; ſo I apprehend our more immediate and principal concern at this day, is to ſuit our diſcourſes to the things that are *now* ſpread abroad.

I ſhall therefore ſhew, that the words of St. *Peter* do not *at all* belong to the controverſy betwixt Proteſtants and Papiſts about the *clearneſs* and *plainneſs* of Scripture in things *neceſſary* to ſalvation. We deſire to ſhew a becoming concern for the

the credit of the Scripture in point of PLAINNESS, as well as *sufficiency* and *perfection*, whilst *they* would make it an accuser and contradictor of it self, in one case as well as the other. And

1. It is to be observed, that the words of St. *Peter* do *evidently imply* the very thing, which the Papists bring them to *disprove*. Because some things are hard to be understood in St. *Paul*'s epistles, and other Scriptures, and the unstable wrest them, therefore the Papists would have them kept from the *common people:* whereas it is manifest, that the apostles allow'd and order'd the Scriptures to be free for the *use* of the *unlearned*, or else how could they *wrest them.* But

2. It is farther evident, that those who are called *unlearned* and *unstable* by St. *Peter*, were not such as the *Romanists* call *unlearned* in this controversy. They were not such as wanted what commonly goes by the name of *learning* in our day; that is, the knowledge of languages, and philosophy, human arts and accomplishments; but such as had not learned the main points of religion, or were not sufficiently acquainted with the grounds and principles of *Christianity*, and therefore were unstable or unsettled. Sometimes seeming to be Christians, and at other times turning to *Judaism* or *Heathenism:* Sometimes seeming to quit their vices, and then again as bad as the dog turning to his vomit, or the sow that is washed to her wallowing in the mire; they are St. *Peter*'s own expressions. Such as were carry'd away sometimes by one opinion, and in a little while by another quite contrary; like those, by St. *Paul* compar'd to " children toss'd to and fro, and carry'd about

" with

" with every wind of doctrine." *Ephes.* iv. 14. So that St. *Peter*'s words are misapply'd shamefully, when they are interpreted concerning the *illiterate* part of mankind in general, instead of being applied to those that were unlearned and unsettled in the scheme and design of Christianity. Again,

3. These very men are not forbidden *the use* of the Scripture by St. *Peter*, bad as they were; nor is there any intimation of blame cast upon their *reading the hard places*; but their destruction is laid wholly upon their *wresting* or abusing them. And if the apostle would not, upon such an occasion, order the *Scripture* to be kept from *those men*, certainly he never intended to deprive *others* in after-ages of such a privilege, for the sake of them that should in any age abuse it, as the unstable then did. To say that men are not to be trusted with the Scriptures, because *some* wrest them to their own destruction, hath just as much sense as to say that men ought not to be trusted with their *liberty*, or *estates*, because such as are of bad principles and depraved morals do great mischief by those things, and very often bring destruction both on themselves and others. And indeed where the *Romanists* have full power, they shew that people are as little to be trusted with *liberty*, or *estates*, as with their *Bibles*.

The direct contrary to this way of arguing, is the *true inference* to be drawn from St. *Peter*'s words. Thus: Since the unlearned and unstable wrest the hard and difficult places of Scripture to their own destruction, therefore we should read them *more humbly*, and *carefully*, and *diligently*.

 This

This is the language of reason; but sure it is the language of violence only, to say, therefore they *shall not be read at all* by the *generality of Christians*. But,

4. St. *Peter* does not speak of any *one book* of Scripture, much less of the Scripture in general, as if it was *dangerously obscure*. *In which* are some things hard to be understood, does not refer to the *epistles* of St. *Paul*, or other books of Scripture, but to those places that relate to the *particular subject* St. *Peter* is treating of in that chapter.* From *particular passages* having certain [δυσνόητα] difficulties, to represent a *whole book* as if it was hard to be understood, is a most sophistical and false way of arguing, easily discerned by every man. There is one thing more to be added, which will effectually take off the pretended objection against the *clearness* of Scripture, as grounded upon the words of St. *Peter*, viz.

5. The things which St. *Peter* says are hard to be understood, and which are wrested by some men to their destruction, are things that might be *let alone* without *endangering their salvation*. So that they are not things *necessary* to salvation, as the *Romish profession* of *faith* suggests, that are spoken of, either with respect to St. *Paul*'s epistles, or other Scripture.

St. *Peter* had been writing concerning the *new heavens* and the *new earth*, and the manner of the world's being *dissolved* at Christ's *second* visible appearance, and of the long-suffering of our Lord, which is for the salvation of all that are to be glorified

* ἐν οἷς cannot be construed *in which epistles*, because ἐπιστολαῖς before is of a different gender. *Vid.* Whitby in loc.

rified with him at that time. Concerning that awful joyful event, St. *Paul* had deliver'd things hard to be underſtood, throughout his *epiſtles*. Such as theſe: " The earneſt expectation of the " creature waiteth for the manifeſtation of the " ſons of God." *Rom.* viii. 19. Again: " Then " cometh the end, when he ſhall have deliver'd " up the kingdom to GOD the Father, when he " ſhall have put down all rule, and all authority " and power." 1 *Cor.* xv. 24. And again: " This we ſay unto you by the word of the Lord, " that we who are alive, and remain to the com- " ing of our Lord, ſhall not prevent them that " are aſleep." 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 15. So in other epiſtles, when this ſubject is treated on, there are things confeſſedly hard to be underſtood. But then, the underſtanding of theſe things is not *neceſſary* to the humble believing pious Chriſtian's *being ſaved* at the coming of Chriſt.

Noah was ſaved, when the reſt of the world was drown'd. And yet he might not be able to conceive how ſuch a *maſs* of *water* ſhould come, as to deluge the whole earth; or what the *new face* and appearance of the world would be, after that deluge. But by an aſſured expectation of the event in *general*, and by a faith unmoved in GOD's promiſe of ſaving him and his family, and living and preaching righteouſneſs all the time that he was preparing the ark, he and his family eſcap'd out of the *common ruins*. So will it be with them that believe and obey the *Goſpel*; they ſhall be ſaved at Chriſt's ſecond coming, though there are ſome things they do not underſtand concerning the *conflagration* of the world, and the *new* diſ-

position or *formation* of the heaven and the earth, and the Son's giving up the *mediatorial kingdom* to the Father, and the like.

These things hard to be understood are not things *necessary to salvation*; and therefore St. *Peter*'s words are not at all to the purpose of the *Romanists*, to prove that the Scriptures are *not sufficiently clear in all points wherein our salvation is concerned.* The truth of the matter is, that the *wresting* of these things is more to be charged on their great and learned men, who explain them so as to set up a *temporal kingdom*, and to expose the whole affair to *scoffs* and contempt, than to the common people's reading them, tho' they should unwillingly misinterpret them, or not be able to understand them.

I will only here add, that as to this subject it self, [the future dissolution of the world, with the manner of Christ's coming to consummate all things in the salvation of the righteous] the difficulties which attend the accounts of it, have had very great and good effects upon *some* even in the lower parts of life, though they are observed to have a bad effect upon others. The minds of many have been *fixed*, by studying these *hard passages*, till they have been *more throughly affected* with the consideration of so stupendous an event, than if such difficulties had never been laid before them. And if in these very things there is *so much* to be understood, as to make men more diligent in their *preparation* for the coming of Christ; then, instead of endangering, they do greatly promote their salvation. And if in the very *hardest things*, the Scripture be sufficiently

ly clear to ſecure and help forward the ſalvation of plain-hearted men, we may well abide by the doctrine of Proteſtants concerning the *perſpicuity* of ſcripture, as well as the *perfection* of it.

The *Pſalmiſt* hath well connected theſe two things, " The law of the Lord is *perfect*, con-" verting the ſoul; the teſtimony of the Lord is " ſure, making wiſe the ſimple, *Pſal.* xix. 7." The law or word of God has all the *perfection* which is neceſſary to turn the ſoul from deſtructive courſes, to the way of life and righteouſneſs; and it has all the *clearneſs* and *certainty* that is neceſſary, as a *teſtimony* or *witneſs* to make the moſt weak, if honeſt minds, wiſe unto ſalvation.

3. I proceed to ſhew, that we have abundant reaſon to receive the holy ſcriptures as the word of God, without depending upon the *teſtimony* of the church of *Rome*, or her *traditions*.

We receive the *canonical ſcripture* upon a quite different foot, from that of its being delivered to us by the *Roman church*. Our evidences, that the ſcripture was given by *inſpiration* of God, and that the books we now receive are *genuine*, are ſuch as would be valid, though there had never been a church of *Rome* at all; yea, our proofs are ſuch as enable us to abide by the writings of the *Old* and *New Teſtament*, in oppoſition to all that the *Romaniſts* have done to corrupt them, and to provoke thoſe men that *have not faith* to write and cavil againſt them.

We plainly ſee, that the two Teſtaments do caſt ſuch a light upon each other, and prophesy

and

and history so exactly tally, notwithstanding the hundreds, yea thousands of years distance in the writing of them, that they are throughout directed by the finger of God. And had not many things been permitted in the *Jewish worship* and *constitution*, purely in consideration of the *hardness of their hearts*, and to prevent their falling into *Heathen idolatry* and superstition, those things that relate to the *Messiah* had been more generally and more clearly understood than they were. The *author* of *scripture* evidently appears to be *omniscient*, clearly discerning all the actions and operations both of *necessary* and *free* agents, and having a perfect view of *all events* throughout all ages of the world. He evidently appears to be a Spirit infinitely wise and good, holy and true, displaying those perfections in the *various ways* of dictating his word, amidst all the follies, enmities and oppositions, sins and errors of men. The things revealed and declared are so sublime, and they are so well calculated to promote *moral virtue* and the good of society, and the things foretold are so much beyond all human *foresight*; the *miracles* wrought to confirm them are so great and numerous, and so much beyond all human *skill* or *might* to effect; and withal so publickly wrought, and the facts so undeniably attested: The *stile* of scripture is so full of majesty, concise and yet clear; the *access* it hath to the *hearts of men* is so quick and powerful, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit, discerning the most secret thoughts, and directing or counter-working the most secret intentions: And then the great and

lasting

lasting *effects* produced by the sacred writings, prove such a mighty power and energy accompanying them: And there is such a *uniformity* throughout, in the substance and spirit of these writings, notwithstanding the various changes of language, and governments, and arts, and fashions in the world: That (all these things being put together) the scripture by its own *light*, and as its own *interpreter*, shews that it was given by inspiration of God. These are proofs to us of the truth of the scripture in general, let the *Romanists*, or *Infidels*, speak of them well or ill.

To proceed: As to the rational proof, that the books we now receive are *genuine*, we draw arguments from the particulars *following*, which have no relation to any such person as the *Pope* of *Rome*, and which have a respect wholly to the times *before that church* pretended to determine what is scripture, and what is not.

Besides the arguments we are furnished with from the *Jews*, and from other *writers* of antient history, to prove the authority and genuineness of the books of the *Old Testament*; we judge of them by their being referr'd to, and declared to be of God, in the *New Testament*. This rule must be allowed good, if the New Testament books were written by inspiration of God, and if we have also proof sufficient of THEIR being handed down to us as they were written. This will abundantly satisfy all common Christians about the Old Testament, so far as the apostles, and their penmen, speak of the books in the *Jewish canon*, and quote them to confirm what they say,

Our

Our proofs of the *New Testament* being *genuine*, we take from historical facts, and from antient records; and from writings of many kinds, that quote the *Gospels*, the *Acts* of the apostles, and their *Epistles*, some hundreds of years before the *church* of *Rome* pretended to have the custody of them.

We look to the age immediately following that of the apostles, to such as were their disciples, and speak of their writings under the names of those *very persons* to whom they are now ascribed. And we look to the succeeding ages, in which many writers both *for* and *against* Christianity, cite passages out of the *Gospels*, the *Acts*, and the *Epistles*, as we now find them in our Testaments. From these scriptures being publish'd in a language most *commonly spoken*, and generally read and understood; and being dispersed into various nations, and soon *translated* into *many different tongues*; we conclude, that if these had been *lost* (any of them) in one place, they would be preserved in other places; or if they had been maimed and corrupted by one set of men, others were still able to rectify those errors. And we have the more certainty in these conclusions, from the *heresies* and *sects* that arose in every age, which made men exceeding *watchful* of each other. And we find both the defenders and adversaries of the Christian faith, quoting these sacred writings in much the same words. *Justin Martyr*'s dialogue with *Trypho* the *Jew*, shews that the *Jews* look'd upon these books as the standing records of Christianity: And *Origen*'s controversy with *Celsus*, shews that the

the *Heathens* allow'd these books to contain the common faith of Christians. This is also confirmed by the writings of *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, *Clemens Alexandrinus*, and others. *Origen* gives us a catalogue of the books of the *New Testament*. And they are set down by two *councils*, *viz.* *Laodicea* and *Carthage*. Some of the books now taken into the *canon* of the New Testament being *question'd*, the debates and enquiries upon that occasion, make the settling of the whole as it now stands the more satisfactory and authentick. To all this we add the confirmation of the principal facts of the New Testament from *antient authors* *, who were *contemporary* with our Saviour, or his apostles, or liv'd near their time. And finally, the accounts we now have of the *various readings* of antient manuscripts, and of the many printed copies of the *Greek* Testament that are extant †, do all of them confirm the present *canon* of scripture in general, however they differ as to particular *texts* or *passages*.

These are evidences of a quite different nature from the pretended *authority* of the church of *Rome*, and therefore the insinuation in the *Grounds of Catholick doctrine* is fallacious, and not worth our farther arguing upon, *That we ought to take the meaning and interpretation of scripture from the church* they call Catholick, *because it is the* same hand *from which we received the Bible itself*. This sacred book has received no advantage, as to its credibility, from its falling into their hands. But much has been done by them

* See *Lardner*'s Credibility of the Gospel History.

† Vid. *Millii* Grec. Test. in Differt. de Lib. N. T. & Canonis Constitutione.

to leſſen its eſteem, and to make men call in queſtion the truth of it; and had it not been *impracticable*, they have ſhewn ſufficient inclination, either to have *altered* it to ſerve their deſigns of power and dominion, or elſe utterly to have *ſuppreſs'd* it. We may truly ſay of the *Roman Clergy* what our Saviour ſays of the *Scribes* and *Phariſees*, that they make "the commandment of God "of none effect, thro' their traditions." *Matt.* xv. 6. This brings me to the other part of the ſubject, which it is expected I ſhould enlarge upon.

II. That a church built upon *traditions* which are *beſide* and *againſt* ſcripture, is a building of *men* formed to ſerve their *own ends*, not thoſe of the *goſpel*.

I have ſaid traditions *beſide* and *againſt* ſcripture, to diſtinguiſh the *traditions* upon which the power and ſuperſtitions of the *Roman church* are built, from thoſe traditions that have their foundation in the ſcripture, and have therefore been received by the *Chriſtian Catholick* church in all ages. The word *tradition* ſignifies only the *delivering* from one to another. When this is applied to the doctrines, or precepts, and the ordinances of the *goſpel*, it is allowed that there are two *ways* of delivering them, namely, by *ſpeaking*, and by *writing*; and I may add, that ſome things are *delivered* and handed down from one age to another, by certain *actions*. Now, we do receive and continue in the things delivered to us by *preaching*, and by *word of mouth*,

mouth, and by ſuch religious *actions* as are to keep up the *remembrance* of Chriſt, and his worſhip and kingdom in the world: But we receive them together with the *written* accounts of them, and *judge* by the ſcripture orders concerning them. We try what is *ſpoken* and *done*, by what is *written*, and make that the only certain *rule* both of our faith and actions. Every church thus built upon *ſcripture traditions*, is in other words built upon the foundation of the *apoſtles* and *prophets*. But a church built upon *unſcriptural* traditions, yea, upon *anti-ſcriptural* traditions, is a building of *men*, raiſed by the help, and at the inſtigation of the God of *this world*; a kingdom ſet up to overthrow the *great deſign* of the goſpel, and in direct oppoſition to our Saviour's declaration, "That his kingdom is not of this world."

They pretend, indeed, that they have *ſcripture* to enforce their *traditions*; and to this end they urge that *text* I mention'd before: "Therefore brethren ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by *word*, or our *epiſtle*." 2 *Theſſ.* ii. 15.

Let us here carefully conſider what the apoſtle *enjoins*, and we ſhall find that this very text obligeth us to *hold ſuch traditions*, as are intirely *ſubverſive* of all that heap of *Popiſh* traditions, which they would have the people to believe are favour'd by this place of ſcripture *.

The apoſtle there ſpeaks of traditions that had been taught *before*, and were taught by the ſame *ſpirit* and the ſame *perſons* that endited the ſcriptures, "traditions which ye *have been taught*,

 "whether

* Grounds of Catholick Doctrine, p. 17. Ed. 4.

" whether by word or our epiſtle." But the *Papiſts* apply this to traditions many *hundreds of years after* the whole *canon* of ſcripture was complete.

The *apoſtle* joins *word* and *letter* together, that they might judge of one by the other, and not advance, or receive things *inconſiſtent*. The *Papiſts* would have this to be underſtood of traditions that *alter* the ſenſe of ſcripture, yea that expreſſly *contradict* it, as we ſhall prove preſently by undeniable and moſt flagrant inſtances. The apoſtle ſpeaks of things firſt delivered *orally* or by *word* of mouth, but afterward committed to *writing* for greater *certainty*. That this was the end of writing, St. *Luke* expreſſly declares, (*Luke* i. 4.) when (under the direction of St. *Paul*, as *Irenæus* and *Euſebius* inform us) he wrote his *goſpel*.

But *Chillingworth* quotes a paſſage from cardinal *Perron*, upon this text of *holding traditions*, that ſays, *We muſt not anſwer that St.* Paul *ſpeaks here only of ſuch traditions, which, tho' not in his epiſtle to the* Theſſalonians, *yet were afterwards written, and in other books of ſcripture, becauſe it is upon occaſion of tradition touching the cauſe of the* hindrance of *the coming of Antichriſt, which was never written, that this injunction is laid down.* To this it is replied, that if the *very tradition* there referr'd to, and which there was ſuch a charge to hold, be yet *loſt*, becauſe it was not written, we have very little reaſon to ſhew any regard to other *oral traditions*, to which this charge of the *apoſtle* cannot have a reſpect*. We

* Chill. *No Church of one Denomination infallible.*

We have ſurely very good reaſon to join with that writer againſt the *Cardinal*, in his ejaculatory thankſgiving on this occaſion: ‘ Bleſſed therefore be ‘ the goodneſs of God, who ſeeing that what was ‘ *not written* was in ſuch danger to be *loſt*, took ‘ order that what was *neceſſary* ſhould be *written*’.

Dr. *Whitby* hath juſtly obſerved, that this is not only a reaſon why the church of *Rome*, or even the *Church Catholick* ſhould be eſteemed no ſure preſerver of *oral traditions*; but it is a very good argument againſt all pretenſions of that kind. There is one thing that makes it very plain to me, that St. *Paul* ſpeaks of traditions firſt given by *word of mouth*, and afterwards in *writing*; which is this, becauſe in the 5th verſe of that very chapter, where he bids the *Theſſalonians* hold the traditions they had been taught, he ſays expreſly, that what he was now actually *writing*, he had *told* them before. “ Remember “ ye not, that when I was yet with you I told “ you theſe things”. And in the 14th verſe he refers to what they were called to by *the goſpel*; which he ſpeaks of as having others joined with him in the delivery of it, *our goſpel*. Having thus TOLD you things firſt, and *written* them to you afterward, we therefore add, *Brethren ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word or our epiſtle.*

This text therefore obligeth us to maintain and abide by the traditions which were received from the *apoſtles themſelves*, which after they were given *orally*, were further given in *writing*; and we are required to ſtand faſt in theſe evidences (or in that tradition) whereby we receive the apoſtolical writings

writings as the word of God: And if we do this, then we are obliged by *these traditions*, to reject all other *traditions* that presume to be of *equal authority*; and much more are we required to fly from those that are *contrary* hereto, wherever they are found. Our *renouncing* the communion, and *protesting* against the errors of the church of *Rome*, is therefore made a duty, an *indispensable duty*, by this place of scripture, which they very imperiously, but yet very stupidly alledge, for the necessity of receiving their *numberless traditions*. For if it be our duty to *stand fast* in the things delivered by the *apostles*, and to *hold* to their *Epistles*, then it is our duty to reject things that are evidently *contrary* to their epistles, and to doctrines and precepts set down in their *writings*.

In like manner, the *other texts* which they quote upon this occasion, do *fix us down* to the things delivered by the *apostles*, against all the demands of them that make their *ecclesiastical* traditions necessary to our being members of the church of Christ. I need only to read them to you as they stand in the *scriptures*, with the alterations made by the *Romanists* application of them, and as wise men leave you to judge which ought to be regarded. St. *Paul* says to the *Corinthians*, "I praise you brethren that you remember me "in all things, and keep the ordinances [or tra-"ditions] as I delivered them to you", 1 *Cor.* xi. 2. According to the *Romanists*, instead of remembring or reverencing the apostle, the reverence must be paid to the *authority* of the *church*; and instead of keeping the traditions as the

the *apoſtle himſelf* delivered them, (who ſays "what he received of the Lord, that alſo he "delivered unto them") they muſt be kept as the *Romiſh church repreſents* them, with all that ſhe hath *added* to them.

Again, St. *Paul* ſays, "We command you "brethren in the name of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, "that ye withdraw yourſelves from every brother "that walketh diſorderly, (and by a parity of reaſon from every church that walketh diſorderly) "and not after the tradition which he received of "us". This US the *Romaniſts* apply to their church, pretending to apoſtolical traditions, not received from the *apoſtles*, but from *Councils* and *Popes* ſeveral hundred years after the *canon* of ſcripture was ſettled. And therefore if that church walk not after the tradition of the *apoſtles*, that text is an expreſs command to *withdraw from them*, 2 *Theſ.* iii. 6. The *apoſtle* ſays, "hold faſt "the form of ſound words which thou haſt heard "of ME, in faith and love which is in Chriſt "Jeſus", 2 *Tim.* i. 13. The *Romaniſts* would have this to be underſtood of all the *traditionary articles* of faith in their church, which are to be held without *love* or *mercy* to thoſe that differ from them. *Timothy* is directed to "commit the "things he had heard of the apoſtle, to faithful "men, who ſhould be able to teach others alſo", 2 *Tim.* ii. 2. Theſe things the *Romaniſts* pretend are committed to them *only*. If it were ſo, the greater is their iniquity, who have been abundantly prov'd the moſt *unfaithful men* in the world, in their with-holding what is truly apoſtolical; and at the ſame time delivering things for apoſtolical,

apoſtolical, which are not ſo, but are moſt directly *oppoſite* to the ſcriptures.

We do not ſay this, without being able to produce many inſtances of the truth of what we aſſert. This hath been fully proved in the diſcourſes foregoing; and the ſubject has been written upon very largely by many learned men. I ſhall only put you in mind of a few paſſages under theſe four heads.

1. Of traditions which *they reject*, though plainly apoſtolical.

2. Of ſome traditions which they ſay are apoſtolical, though they are *not to be met with* in any writings of the apoſtles, nor for ſeveral ages ſucceeding.

3. Of ſome traditions that are *directly contrary* to the ſcriptures, and to the declared ſenſe of the whole Chriſtian church for many ages.

4. Of ſome traditions which have their inſtitution *wholly from the church*, and are therefore called *eccleſiaſtical*; in which they contradict *themſelves*, as well as the *ſcriptures*.

1. For a ſpecimen of traditions which they reject though *plainly* and *undeniably apoſtolical*, I need only to refer you to the main ſubjects of this and the three foregoing diſcourſes. In which we have proved, "That JESUS CHRIST is the only "head of the church, according to the ſcriptures". And "That he and his apoſtles expreſly require "all men to ſearch the ſcriptures". And "That "every man is required to *judge for himſelf* in "things *neceſſary* to ſalvation, as in the ſight of "GOD". And "That the ſcriptures are *ſuffi-* "*ciently plain*, and eaſy to be underſtood ſo far

"as

" as is neceſſary to ſalvation, by every honeſt di-
" ligent mind". And " That they are able to
" make the man of God perfect through faith in
" Chriſt".*

In oppoſition to theſe undoubted *apoſtolical traditions*, you have heard of the arts and pretenſions by which the *Romaniſts* reject them. But I may add, when they would thus ſet aſide the written word of God itſelf, with the head of the corner; who can wonder at their ſetting aſide other things that are expreſly delivered to us in theſe ſcriptures? They make one of the *commandments* of none effect, by their image worſhip. They make the expreſs words of Chriſt in the ſacrament, [*drink ye all of it*] of none effect, by refuſing the cup. They make faith in God, or *divine faith* of none effect, by ſetting up a *human implicit* faith in the ſtead of it. And they make the doctrine of *repentance* of none effect, by their confeſſions and penances and abſolutions, inſtead of real amendment; as you will hear in ſubſequent diſcourſes.

2. For a ſpecimen of traditions which they ſay are *apoſtolical*, though they are neither to be met with in *ſcripture*, nor in any writings in the *firſt ages* of Chriſtianity, take theſe inſtances following.

They have added to the canonical books of ſcripture, thoſe of the *Apocrypha*, which are ſo called becauſe written after *prophesy* and *divine inſpiration* ceaſed. As theſe books were not recei-

* There are ſeveral quotations from ancient writers that deſerve to be conſulted, with reference to theſe things, at the end of archbiſhop *Tillotſon*'s Rule of faith.

ved amongst those *Oracles of God which were committed* to the *Jewish* church, *Rom.* iii. 2. so neither were they admitted by the *Christian church.* For the Council * of *Laodicea* in the *fourth century* set down a catalogue of the canonical books of scripture, in a different manner from what is done by the *Romanists.* The Council of *Trent* expresly mentions *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, *Baruch*, the two Books of *Maccabees*, and a new part of *Esther* and *Daniel*; and declares concerning these *whole books*, with all *their parts*, that whosoever rejects them as not canonical, is accursed. †

They deliver it also as an apostolical tradition, that the *Roman* church is the *mother and mistress of all other churches*; and that *without believing the things she declares there is no salvation.* ‖ It is observed that there are above 100 *Anathema*'s in the Council of *Trent*, upon such as do not believe points of doctrine there laid down, though we cannot find any of them in scripture. The offering of the *sacrifice of the mass for souls in Purgatory*, is a tradition they profess to have from Christ and his apostles ‡. So also are their *mystical benedictions*, their *incensings*, *garments*, *chrism*, *waxlights*, and many other things ** which have no manner of foundation in any apostolical writings. And are these the *faithful men*, Christians, to whom an implicit faith must be yielded? How much better is it to follow that rule of the *apostle*, " Prove all things, hold fast that which is good", 1 *Thes.*

* Can. 60. Vid. Hieron. in Prol. Proverb.
† Concil. Trid. Sess. 4. Decr. de Script.
‖ Bulla Pii IV. ‡ Concil. Trid. Sess. 22. c. 2.
** Ibid c. 5.

1 *Thes.* v. 21. Thus the *Fathers* of the 4th and 5th centuries, even those for whom the *Papists* profess a special veneration, urge Christians to 'attend to the scriptures, looking upon all that 'is disagreeable thereto as adulterate'. There are many passages in St. *Chrysostom* and St. *Austin* often referr'd to on this head. St. *Basil*, whose authority is much used by the *Papists* to enforce oral traditions, yet hath one remarkable passage that shews how he would have them judg'd of. 'It's necessary for those that are young in religion to learn the scriptures, that the mind may 'be well confirmed in piety, and that they may 'not be accustomed to human traditions'. And St. *Cyril* of *Jerusalem* (whose *catechetical discourses* were published about sixteen years after the Council of *Trent*) says, 'It behoveth us not 'to deliver the very least thing of the holy mysteries of faith, without the holy scripture.---- 'That is the security of our faith, not which is 'from our own inventions, but from demonstration of the holy scripture'*. We shall yet see farther need for this advice,

3. By giving you a specimen of some *traditions* that are expresly *contrary to scripture*. Besides what was said under the first head of apostolical traditions that are *set aside*, though the scriptures *plainly enjoin* them; there are other traditions which the church of *Rome* makes necessary, though they are things *expresly prohibited* in the word of God. Of this kind, is the worshipping of God by *images*, in direct contradiction to the *second* commandment, and to the guard set

 upon

* Catechef. 5.

upon it by a particular explication at the time when it was given. ' Ye ſhall not make *with* ' *me* Gods of ſilver, *&c.*" *Exod.* xx. 23. So alſo the worſhip of *angels*, and *ſaints*, notwithſtanding an angel's ſaying upon ſuch an occaſion " See thou do it not"; and an apoſtle's diſlike of the proſtration of *Cornelius*, " Stand up, I my " ſelf alſo am a man": And notwithſtanding ſuch *voluntary humility* being condemned in the *worſhipping of angels*, which is no better than an *intruding into things unſeen*, and a being *vainly puffed up* by a *fleſhly mind*, Coloſ. ii. 18. The blaſphemous adorations of the *Virgin Mary*, are a moſt ſhameful contradiction to the ſcripture rule of worſhip; and conſidering the ſtreſs laid upon this in the *Roman Church*, it deſerves to be particularly expoſed. But I ſhould treſpaſs upon your patience, and too much go into the province of another, if I ſhould enlarge on this head. I will only beg leave to inſtance in one thing more, by which the *whole practice* of godlineſs and virtue is deſtroy'd, and that is their tradition about *works of ſupererogation*, upon which the practice of their granting indulgences is founded *. This is againſt the *expreſs words* of our Saviour, " When ye ſhall have done all theſe things which " are commanded you, ſay we are unprofitable " Servants", *Luke* xvii. 10. And againſt the verſes before our text, as was ſhewn at the beginning of this diſcourſe; and againſt the whole tenor of the goſpel, and the apoſtolical writings. And yet this *overplus* of good works the church of *Rome* pretends to have as a *fund* or *treaſure* in her

* Bellarm. de Indulg. l. 1. c. 2.

her cuſtody, according to the 21ſt ſeſſion of the *council* of *Trent* *; and this treaſure is to be diſpoſed of as their church *ſees fit* †. The *plenary indulgences* granted upon this pretence, are the more to be abhorr'd by all them that believe the *apoſtle*, that " no man ſhall ſee the Lord with-" out holineſs," becauſe *Cardinal Hoſius*, the *Pope*'s *legate* at the council of *Trent*, hath taught, ' *That the doctrine of their church is the* expreſs ' word of God, *and whatever is taught againſt* ' *the ſenſe and conſent of the church is the* expreſs ' word *of the devil* ‡.' Theſe are things ſo ſhocking, that no man can forbear concluding, this *traditionary ſpirit* is that very ſpirit which *works in the children of diſobedience*.

But I muſt haſten, in the *laſt place*, to ſay ſomething briefly on thoſe traditions which have their inſtitution *wholly from the church*, and are therefore called *eccleſiaſtical*; in which they are as notorious for contradicting *themſelves*, as for their contradictions to *ſcripture*.

Some of their writers acknowledge, that the doctrines of *tranſubſtantiation*, and of the *ſeven ſacraments*, and of *Purgatory*, and the like, are *not* in ſcripture; but others earneſtly contend that they are to be proved from thence. And in their *explications* of theſe points, as well as in their ways of *arguing* about them, they have uttered the moſt inconſiſtent things: Not only contradicting one another, but the ſame writer contradicting himſelf, and upon the whole deſtroying the credit of the very things they would enforce by

* Can. 9. † Bellarm. de Indul. l. 1. c. 3. ‡ De expreſſo Dei verbo, p. 642, 643.

by the most shameful affronts offered to common sense and reason. The discourses you are to expect on these heads, as well as upon *Auricular Confession*, *Penances*, *&c.* will doubtless give you proofs enow of their *absurdity* and *inconsistence* with themselves.

I shall only instance in what relates to the *two* main parts of the foregoing discourse; that is, in what they deliver concerning the *use of the scripture*, and concerning *oral tradition* being a *rule of faith*. When we compare their *former* accounts of these things, with the *present* establishment and decrees of their church, we shall find them as directly opposite as words can describe. It has been proved (in former writings against *Popery)* from numerous and undoubted testimonies, that *Catholick tradition* for *fifteen* hundred years allow'd the perfection and plainness of *scripture* as a *rule of faith and manners*. It shall suffice at present to produce *three* witnesses for the proof of this, as low as the *century* preceding that of the council of *Trent*.

The first is that of *Thomas Walden*, who was *Confessor* * to king *Henry* V. He was one of the strenuous opposers of *Wickliff*, whose books were condemned at *Oxford*; at which time the *Lollards* (as all Protestants were then called by way of reproach) were used with great severity at the instigation of the *Popish* Bishops; so our *English* history informs us. Yet in this juncture, and with all the power that *Popery* then had, *Walden* utterly disclaims any such thought, as that of an *equality* between *scripture* and *tradition*; and he particularly

* *Trithemius* de Scrip. Illustr. &c.

particularly insists on the distance that ought to be kept betwixt the *canonical* writings, and *ecclesiastical authority* *.

The *second* witness for the scripture, about the same time, is that of *John Gerson*, who was declared by Cardinal *Zabarella*, in the council of *Constance*, to be the *greatest* divine of his time. He says, 'That *if a man be well skill'd in scrip-* 'ture, his doctrine deserves more *to be regarded* 'than the *Pope's* declaration.' Yea, he adds farther, 'That *if in a* general council *he find* 'the *majority incline to that part which is con-* 'trary to *scripture, he is bound to oppose it:* And 'he instanceth in *Hilary*; shewing that *since* 'the canon *of scripture received by the church,* 'no authority *of the church is to be equall'd to it* †.'

The third witness is *Cajetan*, who was counted the oracle of his day, as Dr. *Stillingfleet* observes. He says, *that the scripture gives such a perfection to a man of God*, (and he evidently asserts the *plainness* as well as perfection of scripture, because he explains the *man of God* to be any *one that devoutly serves him) that he is thereby accomplish'd for every good work* ‡.

Many

* Non quod in auctoritate æquantur, absit; sed sequantur, non quidem in subsidium auctoritatis canonicæ, sed in admonitionem posterorum. *Lib.* 2. *Art.* 2. *c.* 22.

† *Joh. Gerson. Exam. Doctr. p.* 540. To which the passage following may be added, from the *second part* of his *Tryal of Doctrines*. Quoniam scriptura nobis tradita est, tanquam regula sufficiens & infallibilis, pro regimine totius ecclesiastici corporis & membrorum, usque in finem seculi: Est igitur talis ars, talis regula vel exemplar, cui se non conformans alia doctrina, vel abjicienda est ut hæreticalis, aut suspecta aut impertinens ad religionem prorsus est habenda.

‡ Ecce quo tendit utilitas divinæ scripturæ ad perfectionem hominis Dei, (hoc est qui totum seipsum Deo dat) perfectionem, inquam, talem ut sit perfectus ad omne bonum exercendum. *In Ep.* 2. *ad Tim.* iii. 16.

Many other teſtimonies of this kind might be produced, in the cloſe of the 15th century. But from that time the *Romaniſts* determin'd to go another way to work. Inſomuch that they were carried to *oppoſe* and *condemn* all thoſe former *Catholick* traditions. They reſolved with Cardinal *Turrecremata* to found Catholick verities for the future on *unwritten* tradition, as well as on *ſcripture*. And Cardinal *Cuſa* ſet up the notion of a *running ſenſe* of ſcripture, which might be ſuited to the various *occaſions* of the church, and *adapted* to every *new rite* †. Agreeably hereto, Pope *Leo* X. condemns *Martin Luther* for denying the power of the *church* to make *new articles* of faith. In that Pope's *Bull* againſt *Luther*, known by the title of *Exurge Domine*, the 22d propoſition condemned is ſet down thus: " That it is not " in the power of the *Church* or *Pope* to appoint " *new articles* of faith.

The errors and corruptions then complained of, not being poſſible to be defended by *ſcripture*, and yet not being thought requiſite to give them up, ſeveral attempts were made to ſet *traditions* on an *equal foot* with the ſcripture. They muſt no longer ſtand in the place where *Gerſon*, and others of their *own writers* before had placed them, that is, in the *ſecond degree* of the truths of faith, which was the general opinion of the *council* of *Conſtance*; but all manner of attempts were uſed, to raiſe the credit of tradition to the utmoſt height, as the only *ſecure way*. So that they got it inſerted as one of the *canons* of a *provincial*

† Scripturas eſſe ad tempus adaptatas & variè intellectas, ita ut uno tempore ſecundum currentem univerſalem ritum exponerentur, mutato ritu iterum ſententia mutaretur. *Cuſ. ad Bohem. Ep.* ii.

vincial council, in 1527, *That to receive nothing but what is deduced from ſcripture, is a pernicious error* *.

Upon authority of no longer ſtanding than this, the *council* of *Trent* was brought to eſtabliſh it as a neceſſary part of the conſtitution of the *Roman church*, " That their traditions ſhould " be received as of *equal authority* with the " ſcriptures themſelves." Of which we ſpoke in the former part of this diſcourſe.

Thus we ſee, that *tradition* contradicts *tradition*, and the Papiſts now become as inconſiſtent with *themſelves* as with the ſcriptures.

Alike contradictory to all their own former traditions, was their taking the apocryphal books into the *canon* of ſcripture, as many of their moſt learned men ſhew'd in the council of *Trent* itſelf. But I ſhould quite tire you, if I ſhould ſhew the oppoſition there was in the debates on this head. I will only add this ſhort account of it from F. *Paul*'s Hiſtory, who informs us, *That they could by no means agree about making the catalogue of the divine books; and they had ſo much trouble about* SOME PARTS *of the Apocrypha, (not being able to produce any tradition for them) that one while it was propoſed to diſtinguiſh the catalogue into books of different claſſes, or elſe not deſcend to particular books at all; and another while to make only one catalogue*, and *ſet down all the books as of* equal *authority* †. Here again, tradition (par-

* Council of *Sens*, in *France*, Can. 53.

† This is a ſhort account of what is more at large in F. *Paul*'s Hiſtory, tranſlated by *Brent*, in 1726, *p.* 144, 145.

ticularly as to *Baruch)* quite failed; and numbers carried it for the apocryphal books, as they now ſtand in *the decree* to which we referr'd before.

Upon this principle, every new *council* begins a *new ſet* of traditions; and by thus contradicting and leaving the *ſcripture*, men of learning are led into endleſs mazes, and the moſt diſhoneſt arts; and the poor *Laity* in common life are ſubject to perpetual *tyranny*, and to have new *yokes of bondage* put upon them in every age.

May we not therefore ſay of thoſe that *return* to *Popery*, as the apoſtle ſays of the fooliſh *Galatians*, " Who hath bewitched them, that they " ſhould not obey the truth?------To ſuffer ſo " many, or ſo great things in vain, (as we have " ſuffer'd formerly in theſe nations) if it be yet " in vain." But we hope *better things* of you, and things that accompany ſalvation in the compleateſt ſenſe, though we thus ſpeak.

Upon what has been ſaid, I hope the following advices will be acceptable, which with a very brief mention of them, I ſhall leave with you.

When you are ſpeaking with tenderneſs and charity of the multitude of *poor ſouls* that are under the *Roman yoke*, and hoping that many of them may be ſaved, let that very *compaſſion* excite your deteſtation of *Popery*, that hath ſo ſadly *abuſed* and *enſlaved* humble and honeſt minds. And do not flatter any of that church, by allowing that ſalvation is to be had any further,

ther, than as they *believe* and *obey* the ſcriptures.

Take care, if ever you fall into converſation with them upon the head of *traditions*, that you watch againſt their ſubtilty, in quoting *places* of *ſcripture* which ſpeak of traditions before the *canon* of ſcripture was compleated; and in quoting the *Fathers* for the tradition of ſcripture itſelf, or of things declared and proved from thence; and then applying theſe things to enforce their *eccleſiaſtical* demands and deciſions.

Be ſure to *read* the ſcriptures till you are ready in them; and engage thoſe about you, and all that are under your care to do ſo; or elſe the *free uſe* of your Bible, in a language that you underſtand, is a privilege and bleſſing that will riſe up in judgment againſt you.

Watch againſt *infidelity* and *immorality*, and every thing that would diſgrace the ſcripture, conſidering how great advantage is given to the *practices* of the *Romaniſts*, by departing from the ſcripture, either as a rule of faith, or manners.

And *finally*, let the ſcripture be made the great bond of *peace* and *union* amongſt all Proteſtants. In things *expreſſly declared*, and neceſſary to ſalvation, let us firmly and unanimouſly abide; in things *deduced* from ſcripture by fair and juſt conſequences, let us leave every one to *judge* as accountable to God, and to his own conſcience: And in things *diſputable*, and difficult to be underſtood, let us proceed with *care*, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual; and maintain *cha-*

rity, allowing for different ſentiments and opinions.

Here I had cloſed, had I not thought it would be of ſpecial ſervice in ſuch an audience as this, to recite one paſſage from a well-known writer *intire*, which is often quoted by piece-meal: I mean that *immortal paragraph* which we have in *Chillingworth*'s Proof that *Proteſtants are no Hereticks*. Which whoever hears, or reads, as the language of one *converted* from *Popery* by the *ſtudy of the ſcriptures*, cannot help being greatly moved with it, let him hear or read it ever ſo often. Addreſſing to a writer of the *Roman church*, he thus ſummarily pleads the *Proteſtant cauſe*.

'Know then, Sir, that when I ſay the religion 'of *Proteſtants* is in prudence to be preferr'd be- 'fore *yours*; as on the one ſide I do not un- 'derſtand by your religion the doctrine of *Bellar- 'mine* or *Baronius*, or any other private men amongſt 'you, nor the doctrine of the *Sorbone* or of the *Je- 'ſuits*, or of the *Dominicans*, or of any other par- 'ticular company among you; but that wherein 'you all agree, or profeſs to agree, *the doctrine of 'the council of Trent*: So accordingly on the other 'ſide, by the *religion* of *Proteſtants*, I do not 'underſtand the doctrine of *Luther*, or *Calvin*, 'or *Melancthon*, nor the confeſſion of *Auguſta*, 'or *Geneva*, nor the *Catechiſm* of *Heidelberg*, 'nor the articles of the *church* of *England*, no, 'nor the harmony of Proteſtant confeſſions; 'but that wherein they all agree, and which

'they

'they all ſubſcribe with a greater harmony, as 'a *perfect rule* of their faith and actions, that is 'the BIBLE.

'The BIBLE, I ſay the BIBLE only, is the 'religion of Proteſtants, whatſoever elſe they 'believe beſides it: And the plain, irrefragable, 'and indubitable *conſequences* of it, well may 'they hold as matter of opinion; but as mat-'ter of faith and religion, neither can they with 'coherence to their own grounds believe it them-'ſelves, nor require the belief of it of others, 'without moſt high and ſchiſmatical preſumpti-'on. I for my part, after a long, and (as I 'verily believe and hope) impartial ſearch of the '*true way* to *eternal happineſs*, do profeſs plainly 'that I cannot find any reſt for the ſole of my 'foot, but upon this rock only.

'I ſee plainly, and with mine own eyes, that 'there are Pope's againſt Pope's, Councils againſt 'Councils, ſome Fathers againſt others, the 'ſame Fathers againſt themſelves, a conſent of 'Fathers of one age againſt a conſent of Fathers 'of another age, the Church of one age againſt 'the Church of another age: Traditive inter-'pretations of ſcripture are pretended, but there 'are few or none to be found: No tradition but 'only of ſcripture, can derive itſelf from the 'fountain, but may be plainly proved to be 'brought in, in ſuch an age after Chriſt, or 'that ſuch an age it was not in. In a 'word, there is no ſufficient *certainty* but of 'ſcripture only, for any conſidering man to build 'upon. This therefore, and this only I have 'reaſon to believe; This I will profeſs, accord-

ing

‘ ing to this I will live, and for this if there
‘ be occasion I will not only willingly, but even
‘ gladly, lose my life, though I should be sorry
‘ that *Christians* should take it from me.

‘ Propose me any thing out of this book, and
‘ require whether I believe or no, and seem it
‘ never so incomprehensible to human reason,
‘ I will subscribe it with hand and heart, as
‘ knowing no demonstration can be stronger than
‘ this, “ God hath said so, therefore it is true”.
‘ In other things, I will take no man’s liberty of
‘ judging from him; neither shall any man take
‘ mine from me. I will think no man the worse
‘ *man*, nor the worse *Christian*, I will love no
‘ man the less for differing in opinion from me.
‘ And what measure I mete to others, I expect
‘ from them again. I am fully assured that God
‘ *does* not, and therefore men *ought* not to re-
‘ quire any more of any man than this, “ To
“ believe the scripture to be God’s word, to en-
“ deavour to find the true sense of it, and to live
“ according to it”.

May this be our happiness through Jesus Christ our Lord, to whom be glory now and ever. *Amen.*

F I N I S.